United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Additional Serb forces move into Sava River Bridge area where UNPROFOR personnel have been prevented from moving since last Friday; troops from UNPROFOR's Jordanian, Nepalese, Argentinian and French battalions set up checkpoint near bridge and halt all but humanitarian traffic.

+ Liberian parties reach agreement on most remaining issues impeding start of disarmament and installation of transitional Government, Secretary-General says in report on UNOMIL; elections set for 7 September.

+ Special Rapporteur on Haiti urges Human Rights Commission to ask Security Council to intensify sanctions against Haitian military regime and to seek new ways to help Haitian people free themselves from "reign of terror".

+ With United Nations support to re-establish Somali police force, 8,000 former policemen have returned to work; $9 million contributed and $18.6 million pledged to support process.

+ 27 countries and European Union, representing 87 per cent of world cocoa exports and 55 per cent of world cocoa imports decide to put International Cocoa Agreement, 1993, into effect.

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A spokesman for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reported today that Serb Territorial Forces had reinforced their positions around the Sava River Bridge, where since last Friday some 100 local Serb militiamen had been preventing the movement of UNPROFOR personnel. The Serb forces were also reported to have laid out mines on the road leading to the bridge, which lies within a United Nations protected area (UNPA).

Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, said on Tuesday that he had been exploring ways of resolving the situation, but that following an on-site assessment by the Deputy Force Commander, General John MacInnis, he had decided to redeploy additional UNPROFOR troops to the area.

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The spokesman said today that UNPROFOR personnel from the Jordanian, Nepalese, Argentinian and French battalions had moved into the area and had set up a checkpoint approximately 1000 metres from the bridge, stopping all but humanitarian traffic.

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The Liberian parties have reached agreement on most of the outstanding issues that were impeding the start of disarmament and the installation of a transitional Government, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In an addendum, dated 23 February, to his second progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) (S/1994/168/Add.1), he said that the agreement had been reached at a meeting in Monrovia on 15 February facilitated by his Special Representative and the Eminent Person of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The Secretary-General, in his second progress report on 14 February, had emphasized to the parties in Liberia that the international community's continued support for UNOMIL would depend on the prompt implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, including the installation of the transitional Government, disarmament and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Liberian parties reaffirmed at their recent meeting that the Cotonou Agreement provided the best framework for durable peace in Liberia, and agreed that elections would be held on 7 September. They were not able to reach agreement, however, on the disposition of the Cabinet posts of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance and Defence. Mr. Boutros-Ghali urged them to demonstrate maximum flexibility and to spare no effort to resolve their remaining differences.

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The United Nations Human Rights Commission's Special Rapporteur on Haiti, Marco Trulio-Brunocelli, told the Commission today that it should ask the Security Council and the Organization of American States (OAS) to maintain and even intensify sanctions against the Haitian military regime. He said those bodies should also look for new ways in which the international community could help the Haitian people free themselves from the present reign of terror and establish a civilian government that would guarantee the enjoyment of the most basic human rights.

Summarizing the situation in Haiti, Professor Brunocelli said that since the Haitian military renounced the Governors Island Agreement last October and prevented the return of President Jean Bertrand Aristide, Haiti had become a territory occupied by criminal bands who spread terror and acted without the least fear of punishment. Any citizen at any time anywhere in Haiti could be killed, detained, beaten or tortured without reason or explanation. He described a resurgence of the exodus of boat people, and said that the Haitian military had breached all the agreements it signed.

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In its effort to promote national rehabilitation in Somalia and to develop the country's infrastructure, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) is working to re-establish an effective, indigenous police force. According to a United Nations spokesman, 8,000 former Somali policemen have already returned to their jobs. The Organization has provided them with uniforms and vehicles, and UNOSOM recently conducted a two-week training course for police mechanics from across Somalia, to teach them how to use and maintain vehicles supplied by the United States.

The Security Council, in resolution 865, adopted on 22 September 1993, affirmed its commitment to the re-establishment of Somalia's police force, as well as the country's judicial and penal systems. It urged Member States to provide assistance, including personnel, financial support, equipment and training for that effort. To date, cash contributions totalling $9 million have been received, and others for $18.6 million have been pledged.

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At a meeting held in London earlier this week, 27 countries and the European Union, representing 87 per cent of world exports and 55 per cent of world imports of cocoa, decided to put the International Cocoa Agreement of 1993 into effect among themselves as of last Tuesday.

The new Agreement brings together all major producers, including Malaysia, which was not a member of the previous Agreement. The main absentee on the consumers' side remains the United States, which was not a member of the 1986 Agreement either. The new International Cocoa Agreement was negotiated during 1992 and 1993 under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It will remain in force until 30 September 1999, and can be extended for another four years. Alain Gauze, the Minister in charge of commodities in Côte d'Ivoire, the world's major cocoa producer, stated that with the entry into force of the new Agreement it was now possible for producer and consumer countries to manage the market together and to give the world cocoa economy the vitality it had lacked over the last eight years.

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